This session is designed as an opportunity for those who plan to undertake or supervise evaluation or research on blended education to share perspectives, to work together to build a common language, and to articulate the issues surrounding research and evaluation in this rapidly growing field. The afternoon will open with a discussion of the broad purposes of, and models for, K-12 blended learning, followed by a series of small-group round tables in which we will discuss the issues, challenges, and needs faced by those attempting to implement blended education, the key research questions that need to be addressed, the research and evaluation methods that are appropriate for these questions, and the data and knowledge management systems that can support this research. Participants will take with them examples of research and evaluation approaches specific to blended education, as well as promising questions for advancing practice through comparisons within and across models.

Session wiki, <http://vss11.wikispaces.com/preconferenceafternoon>

Overview of blended education models as outlined in the 2010 and 2011 Innosight reports

A framework with attention to the alignment of models with programs' purposes and missions

* Program-level blending combines online and onground courses (EPGY, FL, KY, MI, Nashville)
  + Online courses accessed in the school lab as part of a student’s schedule
  + Online courses accessed outside of school supplementing a student’s schedule
* School-level blending integrates online and onground experiences in the same course (KIPP, Rocketship, Riverside, Thesys)
  + Activities experienced as a full class group in the same room
  + Activities experienced in small groups in the same room
  + Activities occurring in a classroom and a lab
  + Activities occurring in a school, online and offsite according to the teacher’s design
  + Activities occurring in a school and online according to individual student needs
  + Activities occurring primarily online with teacher/tutor support as needed by individual students
  + Activities occurring primarily online with onsite teacher/tutor support as needed by individual students
  + Activities occurring primarily online and offsite with teacher/tutor interaction onsite as needed by individual students

Examples of blended education program effectiveness measures

Measures reported in the iNACOL Lessons Learned from K-12 Blended Programs book (2012. Ferdig, Cavanaugh& Friedhoff, editors)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Categories | Measures | Example programs |
| Academic | Increased college readiness | Bishop Kelly HS, ID. KIPP Empower Academy, CA. Riverside Virtual School, CA. |
|  | Increased access to courses needed by each student | Bishop Kelly HS, ID. Nashville Virtual School, TN. Riverside Virtual School, CA. |
|  | State standardized tests | Carpe Diem Charter, AZ. EPGY, CA. KIPP Empower Academy, CA. iLearnNYC, NY. Rocketship Education, CA. |
|  | High school completion rates | Connections ACCESS program, MD. Nashville Virtual School, TN. Riverside Virtual School, CA. |
|  | Course completion rates | Kentwood HS, MI. Thesys International, CA. |
| Satisfaction | Student satisfaction, perceptions | Connections ACCESS program, MD. EPGY, CA. Kentwood HS, MI. Riverside Virtual School, CA. Thesys International, CA. |
|  | Teacher satisfaction, retention | Kentwood HS, MI. KIPP Empower Academy, CA. iLearnNYC, NY. Riverside Virtual School, CA. Thesys International, CA. |
|  | Parent satisfaction | KIPP Empower Academy, CA. |
| Follow-up | Student competitiveness for college acceptance | EPGY, CA. |
|  | Student course grade in blended course and subsequent course | Thesys International, CA. |
| Other | Changing teaching and learning through integration of online experiences | Bishop Kelly HS, ID. |
|  | Growth in applications and enrollment | EPGY, CA. |
|  | Cost efficiency | KIPP Empower Academy, CA. |

Examples of blended education findings from programs and research

Measures reported in the iNACOL Lessons Learned from K-12 Blended Programs book (2012. Ferdig, Cavanaugh& Friedhoff, editors)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Categories | Measures | Example findings |
| Academic | Increased college readiness | Increases documented (EPGY) |
|  | Increased access to courses needed by each student | Increases documented (EPGY) |
|  | State standardized tests | Increases documented (EPGY); equivalent performance documented (iLearnNYC); statistically higher gains in overall math scores (Rocketship) |
|  | High school completion rates |  |
|  | Course completion rates | Rate of course completion increased in subjects except math in Year 1 (CA); some students can achieve greater academic success in a blended-instruction classroom than they can in a traditional one (Kentwood); |
| Satisfaction | Student satisfaction, perceptions | Student satisfaction high (CA, EPGY, Thesys); feel connected and happy with the school, have no problems with bullying, and have sufficient friendships (EPGY); problems stem from technical issues, too much work from all courses (EPGY); students learned to take responsibility, to manage their time, to finish the job, and to ask for help when they needed it.  As a result, the class, though larger than most, had fewer disciplinary referrals than usual in a high school classroom (Kentwood); |
|  | Teacher satisfaction, retention | Most teachers were satisfied and choose to continue, reported that problems were technical, wanted clearer guidance on design of blended courses and effective use of online resources (iLearnNYC); teachers expressed that they wanted to use more digital content for their classroom (Thesys); se of staff and computers allowed them—many for the first time in their teaching careers—to truly get to know their students (KIPP) |
|  | Parent satisfaction | Stronger school-to-home communication (Riverside); higher in the blended school than in other schools in the network (KIPP) |
| Follow-up | Student competitiveness for college acceptance |  |
|  | Student course grade in blended course and subsequent course |  |
| Other | Changing teaching and learning through integration of online experiences | Blended learning removes some of the boundaries in education, …enhanced the teachers’ creativity,….opened the door for varied learning,…increased communication between teachers and students and between teachers and parents,…teachers’ skills have increased significantly (BKHS); increased the frequency and quality of feedback between teachers and students (Riverside); even gifted students struggled with the independence in the new learning environment (Riverside) |
|  | Growth in applications and enrollment | Increases documented (EPGY) |
|  | Cost efficiency |  |

More research on blended programs:

Louisiana Algebra courses

Zucker, A. (2005). A study of student interaction and collaboration in the virtual high school. In R. Smith, T. Clark, & B. Blomeyer (Eds.), *A synthesis of new research in K–12 online learning* (pp. 43–45). Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates.

* Students in several rural schools took the same blended algebra course taught by an online teacher and facilitated by local aides who were earning their certifications.
* in the blended course performed better on a content exam than their matched peers in traditional classroom courses.

West Virginia Spanish courses

Rockman et al. (2007). *ED PACE Final Report* (Evaluation of the West Virginia Dept. of Education Virtual School Spanish Program). San Francisco, CA: Rockman et al.

* Students in the classroom version of the course performed better on a writing test than the pupils in the blended course.
* Teachers who made more connections between their online course and other content areas had students who performed at measurably higher levels in a study of a state-wide Spanish course, as did teachers who showed higher levels of student engagement, valuing the course, and community
* More adult use, student use, and interpersonal authentic practice of the target language related to higher student performance, while closed-ended and paper-based activities related to lower levels of performance.
* Frequency of interactions in an online course among learners, the course interface, and the instructor has been associated with significantly higher course achievement.